

THE INDIAN NATIONS.

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first, then they go on in rotation and in order of seniority, the drum beating all the time, as it were to give to the relation the greater appearance of reality. After each has made a short recital in his turn, they begin again in the same order, and so continue going the rounds, in a kind of alternate chaunting, until every one has concluded. On these occasions, great care must be taken not to give offence by affecting superiority over the others, for every warrior feels his own consequence, and is ready, if insulted, to shew by his actions, what he has performed in war and is still able to do. I well remember an instance of the kind, when an insulted warrior stepped out of the circle in which he was dancing, and struck dead the impudent boaster who had offended him. 727

Their songs are in general of the warlike or of the tender and pathetic kind. They are sung in short sentences, not without some kind of measure, harmonious to an Indian ear. The music is well adapted to the words, and to me is not displeasing. I would not attempt to give an idea of it by means of our musical notes, as has been done by other writers, lest I should be as unsuccessful as those who have tried in the same manner to describe the melodies of the ancient Greeks. It would be well if I could describe at one and the same time the whole combination of effects which acted upon my ear, but it is vain to endeavour to do it partially. It is, indeed, much the same with their poetry; yet I cannot resist the temptation of translating as well as I can, the words of the Lenape's song, when they go out to war. They sing it, as I give it here, in short lines or sentences, not always the whole at one time, but most generally in detached parts, as time permits and as the occasion or their feelings prompt them. Their accent is very pathetic, and the whole, in their language, produces considerable effect. 533